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**Name of Organization:** The Nature Conservancy

**Type of Organization:** Other

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**Project Title:** Upper Peninsula Landscape Conservation Project

**Project Category:** Habitat (Ecological) Protection and Rest

**Rank by Organization (if applicable):** 1

**Total Funding Requested (\$):** 66,850 **Project Duration:** 1.5 Years

**Abstract:**

The Nature Conservancy's Michigan Chapter has recently completed a comprehensive vision and blueprint for conservation action over the long-term. Ecoregional planning and prioritization led by the Conservancy's Great Lakes Program, and supported by GLNPO, has created a clear understanding of priority sites and landscapes that has never before existed, and it will prioritize conservation action for the Conservancy and partners throughout the state. This new vision represents more than three times the number of priority places historically focused on by the chapter, and therefore, a significant increase in funding is needed to support important conservation action. The next step is to deploy our staff and resources to ensure the protection of these areas. Based on extensive data gathered on local partners, urgency, threats, and opportunities, the Conservancy has identified priority landscape project areas that will be staffed and launched as a vehicle for taking conservation action. The Conservancy has a strong track record in community-based landscape area conservation, and we believe that serving as a catalyst and supporting partners in local conservation action is fundamental to our mission success. This preproposal respectfully requests support to launch a priority landscape project that focuses on the most intact landscape remaining in the state; the Upper Peninsula (UP), with special focus on the Garden Peninsula and forest habitat across the peninsula--linking GLNPO's Keweenaw Peninsula and Mackinac-Manitoulin biodiversity investment areas. The priority threats identified in this landscape are incompatible forestry practices and development. These threats are urgent and compelling, and a local presence will enable us to work locally on protection and land-use planning, develop partnerships with land trusts and large-tract timber interests, and work to ensure sustainable long-term conservation of Michigan's natural heritage.

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**Geographic Areas Affected by the Project**

**States:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/> New York
<input type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin
<input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota	<input type="checkbox"/> Ohio

**Lakes:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Erie
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Huron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> All Lakes

**Geographic Initiatives:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Greater Chicago	<input type="checkbox"/> NE Ohio	<input type="checkbox"/> NW Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> SE Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> Lake St. Clair
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**Primary Affected Area of Concern:** Manistique River, MI

**Other Affected Areas of Concern:**

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***For Habitat Projects Only:***

**Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area:** Keweenaw Peninsula

**Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:** Mackinac-Manitoulin, Michigan Islands, Grand Sable Dunes

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**Problem Statement:**

In 1997, with support from GLNPO, the Conservancy launched an ambitious effort to systematically identify the full range of priority conservation sites that will sustain biodiversity across the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes ecoregion. The State of Michigan contains half of the priority sites identified, and the Michigan Chapter of the Conservancy is poised to act on the priority sites identified. Through an extensive threats and feasibility analysis of all the sites across the ecoregion, half of the sites were identified as needing action within the next five years if conservation success is to be possible over the long-term. Development and incompatible forest practices were identified as two of the top three threats facing Great Lakes priority conservation sites. The Conservancy has identified key landscape project areas across the state as an approach to deploying staff and resources to ensure conservation of the priority sites identified areas across the state. One of the most urgent and threatened landscape areas focuses on the Garden Peninsula and the forest communities across the Upper Peninsula. This proposal requests funds to enable the Conservancy to launch a landscape project in the Upper Peninsula--a landscape featuring globally rare alvar habitat as well as the most intact forest landscapes remaining in Michigan and the Great Lakes, and part of the longest unfragmented range of forest in North America, beginning in the UP and reaching to Alaska.

This work is a logical next step to TNC and GLNPO's collaborative effort to create a conservation vision in the Great Lakes--taking action to ensure that that vision is realized. By taking swift action to begin working locally with key landowners and timber interests, local government and land-use decision-makers, local conservation partners, and state and federal public lands partners, we have a chance to ensure protection of the globally significant landscape that the UP represents, and to build local and state-level capacity to ensure its protection over the long-term.

**Proposed Work Outcome:**

There are many valuable conservation efforts underway in the UP, including local land trust activity, forums for sustainable forestry, state and federal forest planning processes, and two other landscape project initiatives of the Conservancy's: Northern Lake Huron, and the Keweenaw Peninsula. This landscape project initiative would focus on priority conservation sites located between the Conservancy's two existing landscape projects, linking and complementing existing conservation activities, and focus in particular on large-tract forest landowners and managers, and the Garden Peninsula. The proposed work and outcomes for this preproposal are outlined below in four steps.

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#### Steps 1 and 2: Outreach to Key Local Partners and Hire a Landscape Project Director

While the Conservancy launches this landscape project, it would be important to ensure that we do not miss current opportunities for conservation action in the UP. The Conservancy needs to increase its efforts to reach out to key local partners in the UP, share the results of ecoregional planning, and ensure that information regarding priority sites is informing decision-making processes that will have an impact on the landscape. This would be the role of a Landscape Project Director, which would be hired with the funds requested in this preproposal. However, part of the funding requested would support existing staff efforts to conduct outreach until this person is found. Outreach activities would focus on informing state and federal forest plan revisions underway in the UP and working with timber interests who are evaluating their approach to timbering and conducting inventories of their lands to identify conservation and timbering priorities. In addition, funding from this proposal would support existing staff efforts to identify urgent shoreline protection opportunities in the Garden Peninsula until a landscape project director is hired.

#### Step 3: Develop a Landscape Conservation Plan

A critical tool to the Conservancy's future conservation action in the UP would be developing a Landscape Conservation Plan. The Conservancy has developed a common-sense approach that focuses on the natural elements that are the priority for protection, identifying natural systems that support and sustain these natural elements, and identifying the actions needed to mitigate the threats to these systems. It is an extensive and thoughtful planning process that includes consideration of social and economic needs in local communities, and seeks to identify compatible and collaborative solutions to addressing the threats to priority biodiversity. This Landscape Conservation Plan would drive all the Conservancy's future activities for this project.

#### Step 4: Community Based Conservation and Local Capacity Building

While many activities would be identified in the Landscape Conservation Plan developed for this landscape project initiative, there would be many activities that the Conservancy can and would undertake concurrently to the development of the plan. The landscape project director would focus on developing relationships with key local partners, community leaders, government officials, and landowners; identifying land-use decision-making processes that the Conservancy could assist and inform; identifying capacity-building needs; and facilitating training and collaborative opportunities to build capacity locally for conservation action.

The steps above reflect the fundamental building blocks necessary for long-term conservation success in the UP. It reflects the need for developing a strategic and thoughtful plan for action, yet recognizes the need to become involved and take action while the long-term plan is developed. Most importantly, it reflects an understanding that the Conservancy has developed over the years and has found success in: true conservation action and success is often only possible through a local presence and through working with partners.

While this preproposal requests support for these very important first steps, the Conservancy's commitment to this landscape project would last long into the future. It is the Conservancy's hope that through partnership with GLNPO and many other key partners, we can work quickly enough to protect the unique, beautiful, and globally significant diversity of life found in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

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**Project Milestones:****Dates:**

Project Start	06/2000
Begin outreach to key local partners	07/2000
Hire landscape project director	09/2000
Begin developing landscape conserv. plan	09/2000
Begin community-based conserv. activity	01/2001
Dev. capacity bldg for local land trusts	06/2001
Complete landscape conservation plan	09/2001
Project End	12/2001

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☐ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

**If So, Description of How:**

☒ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

**If So, Description of How:**

Education and outreach are key components to a community-based project such as this landscape project initiative. Conservation success is not possible without efforts to raise awareness about the importance of the Upper Peninsula landscape, its critical habitats and species. Thoughtful land-use planning and compatible economic development can only come through proper outreach and education on where priority places are, and the level of protection these species and natural communities require, and people's role and responsibility in ensuring that protection. The lessons learned from our efforts in this landscape project will be very important for the Conservancy to disseminate--particularly to the Conservancy's landscape projects in the Keweenaw Peninsula and Northern Lake Huron, as well as those across the organization. We also will share what we learn and our tools and strategies with other land trusts across the state at the two annual meetings of Michigan land trusts and the proposed Great Lakes office of Land Trust Alliance. Sharing what we learn, tools, and strategies is very important across the Conservancy and for partners, to ensure we are applying our best tools and resources to the job. The results also will be reported through the Great Lakes Program's web page, and state chapter newsletter. A summary report of the Conservancy's work will be provided to GLNPO for distribution through either print or electronic media.

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**Project Budget:**

	<b>Federal Share Requested (\$)</b>	<b>Applicant's Share (\$)</b>
<b>Personnel:</b>	39,788	40,893
<b>Fringe:</b>	14,920	15,335
<b>Travel:</b>	750	5,000
<b>Equipment:</b>	0	25,000
<b>Supplies:</b>	250	4,000
<b>Contracts:</b>	0	0
<b>Construction:</b>	0	0
<b>Other:</b>	0	10,000
<b>Total Direct Costs:</b>	55,708	100,228
<b>Indirect Costs:</b>	11,142	20,046
<b>Total:</b>	66,850	120,274
<b>Projected Income:</b>	0	0

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**Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):**

The amount requested in this preproposal represents only a small portion of the costs needed over the 1.5-year timeline outlined in this preproposal for launching the Upper Peninsula landscape project. The Michigan Chapter of The Nature Conservancy is committed to matching and raising the remaining costs identified in this budget, which reflects the operations costs projected for the first 1.5 years. The Chapter is committed to raising the other additional essential costs not reflected in this budget, including funding for land acquisition and easements, partner trainings, government and community relations, and landowner outreach programs. The Conservancy is preparing proposals to secure challenge grants from private individuals, corporations, and foundations, including the Herbert and Grace Dow Foundation, to secure the needed funding to be successful.

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**Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:**

Conservation of biodiversity in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, a wide expanse of important landscape, can only be achieved through collaboration with many partners--including individuals, local and state government, other land trusts, state and national parks and forests, universities, and large landowners such as timber interests. The success of a landscape project initiative such as this depends on the interest, trust, support, and involvement of these partners. The Conservancy hopes to serve as a catalyst for comprehensive conservation action and a supporting participant of community based conservation activities. We believe this kind of collaboration and support is possible with the clarity of the conservation vision outlined by the Conservancy's ecoregional planning, the current climate of public support for conservation, and the UP residents' love for their land, concern about development, and interest in long-range land-use planning.